

THE  
COMPLAINT:

OR,

Right = Thoughts

ON

LIFE, DEATH, & IMMORTALITY.

---

NIGHT THE FIRST.

---

HUMBLY INSCRIB'D

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE

ARTHUR ONSLOW, Esq;

SPEAKER of the House of COMMONS.

---

The SECOND EDITION.

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*Sunt lacrymæ rerum, & mentem mortalia tangunt.* VIRG.

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L O N D O N :

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COMPTON  
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THE  
COMPLAINT.

NIGHT the FIRST.



THIR'D nature's sweet Restorer, balmy *Sleep*!  
He, like the World, his ready visit pays,  
Where Fortune smiles; the wretched he for-  
Swift on his downy pinion flies from Woe, [sakes:  
And lights on Lids unfully'd with a Tear.

From short, (as usual) and disturb'd Repose,  
I wake: How happy they who wake no more!



Yet that were vain, if Dreams infest the Grave.

I wake, emerging from a sea of Dreams

Tumultuous; where my wreck'd, desponding Thought

From wave to wave of *fancy'd* Misery,

11

At random drove, her helm of Reason lost;

Tho' now restor'd, 'tis only Change of pain,

A bitter change; feverer for severe:

The *Day* too short for my Distress! and *Night*

Even in the *Zenith* of her dark Domain,

Is Sun-shine, to the colour of my Fate.

*Night*, fable Goddess! from her *Ebon* throne,

In rayless Majesty, now stretches forth

Her leaden Scepter o'er a slumbering world:

20

Silence, how dead? and Darkness how profound?

Nor Eye, nor list'ning Ear an Object finds;

Creation sleeps. 'Tis, as the general Pulse

Of life stood still, and Nature made a Pause;

An



An awful pause! prophetic of her End.  
 And let her prophecy be soon fulfill'd;  
 Fate! drop the Curtain; I can lose no more.

*Silence*, and *Darkness*! solemn Sisters! Twins  
 From antient *Night*, who nurse the tender Thought  
 To *Reason*, and on reason build *Resolve*, 30  
 (That column of true Majesty in man)  
 Assist me: I will thank you in the Grave;  
 The grave, your Kingdom: *There* this Frame shall fall  
 A victim sacred to your dreary shrine:  
 But what are Ye? *Thou*, who didst put to flight  
 Primæval *Silence*, when the Morning-Stars  
 Exulting, shouted o'er the rising Ball;  
 O thou! whose Word from solid *Darkness* struck  
 That spark, the Sun; strike Wisdom from my soul;  
 My soul which flies to thee, her Trust, her Treasure;  
 As misers to their Gold, while others rest. 41

Thro'



Thro' this Opaque of *Nature*, and of *Soul*,  
 This double Night, transmit one pitying ray,  
 To lighten, and to chear : O lead my Mind,  
 (A Mind that fain would wander from its Woe,)  
 Lead it thro' various scenes of *Life* and *Death*,  
 And from each scene, the noblest Truths inspire :  
 Nor less inspire my *Conduct*, than my *Song* ;  
 Teach my best Reason, Reason ; my best Will  
 Teach Rectitude ; and fix my firm Resolve 50  
 Wisdom to wed, and pay her long Arrear.  
 Nor let the vial of thy Vengeance pour'd  
 On this devoted head, be pour'd in vain.

The Bell strikes *One* : We take no note of Time,  
 But from its Loss. To give it then a Tongue,  
 Is wise in man. As if an Angel spoke,  
 I feel the solemn Sound. If heard aright,  
 It is the *Knell* of my departed Hours ;

Where



Where are they? with the years beyond the Flood:  
 It is the *Signal* that demands Dispatch; 60  
 How Much is to be done? my Hopes and Fears  
 Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow Verge  
 Look down-----on what? a fathomless Abyfs;  
 A dread Eternity! how surely *mine*!  
 And can Eternity belong to me,  
 Poor Pensioner on the bounties of an Hour?

How poor? how rich? how abject? how august?  
 How complicate? how wonderful is Man?  
 How passing wonder He, who made him such?  
 Who center'd in our make such strange Extremes? 70  
 From different Natures, marvelously mixt,  
*Connection* exquisite of distant Worlds!  
 Distinguisht *Link* in Being's endless Chain!  
*Midway* from *Nothing* to the *Deity*!  
 A Beam etherial fully'd, and absorpt!

Tho'



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Tho'



Tho' fully'd, and dishonour'd, still Divine!  
 Dim Miniature of Greatness absolute!  
 An Heir of Glory! a frail Child of Dust!  
*Helpless* Immortal! Insect *infinite*!  
 A Worm! a God! I tremble at myself,  
 And in myself am lost! At home a Stranger,  
 Thought wanders up and down, surpriz'd, aghast,  
 And wond'ring at her *own*: How Reason reels?  
 O what a Miracle to man is man,  
 Triumphantly distress'd? what Joy, what Dread?  
 Alternately transported, and alarm'd!  
 What can preserve my Life? or what destroy?  
 An Angel's arm can't snatch me from the Grave;  
 Legions of Angels can't confine me There.

80

'Tis past Conjecture; all things rise in Proof: 90  
 While o'er my limbs *Sleep's* soft dominion spread,  
 What, tho' my Soul phantastic Measures trod,

O'er



O'er Fairy Fields ; or mourn'd along the gloom  
 Of pathless Woods : or down the craggy Steep  
 Hurl'd headlong, swam with pain the mantled Pool ;  
 Or scal'd the Cliff ; or danc'd on hollow Winds,  
 With antic Shapes, wild Natives of the Brain?  
 Her ceaseless Flight, tho' devious, speaks her Nature  
 Of subtler Essence than the trodden Clod ;  
 Active, aerial, tow'ring, unconfin'd, 100  
 Unfetter'd with her gross Companion's fall :  
 Ev'n silent Night proclaims my Soul immortal :  
 Ev'n silent Night proclaims eternal Day :  
 For human weal, Heaven husbands all events,  
 Dull Sleep instructs, nor sport vain Dreams in vain.

Why then *their* Loss deplore, that are not lost?  
 Why wanders wretched Thought their Tombs around,  
 In infidel distress? are *Angels* there?  
 Slumbers, rak'd up in dust, Etherial fire?

B

They



They live ! they greatly live a life on earth 110  
 Unkindled, unconceiv'd ; and from an eye  
 Of Tendernefs, let heav'nly pity fall  
 On me, more juftly number'd with the Dead :  
*This* is the Defert, *this* the Solitude :  
 How populous ? how vital, is the Grave ?  
*This* is Creation's melancholy Vault,  
 The Vale funereal, the fad *Cyprefs* gloom ;  
 The land of Apparitions, empty Shades :  
 All, all on earth is *Shadow*, all beyond  
 Is *Subftance* ; the reverse is Folly's *creed* ; 120  
 How folid all, where Change fhall be no more ?

*This* is the bud of Being, the dim Dawn,  
 The twilight of our Day, the Vestibule,  
*Life's* Theater as yet is fhut, and Death,  
 Strong Death alone can heave the maffy Bar,  
 This grofs impediment of Clay remove,

And



And make us Embryos of Existence free.  
 From *real* life, but little more remote  
 Is *He*, not yet a candidate for Light,  
 The *future* Embryo, slumbering in his Sire. 130  
 Embryos we must be, till we burst the Shell,  
 Yon ambient, azure shell, and spring to Life,  
 The life of Gods : O Transport ! and of Man.

Yet man, fool man ! here burys all his Thoughts ;  
 Inters celestial Hopes without one Sigh :  
 Prisoner of Earth, and pent beneath the Moon,  
*Here* pinions all his Wishes ; wing'd by Heaven  
 To fly at infinite ; and reach it there,  
 Where *Seraphs* gather Immortality,  
 On life's fair Tree, fast by the throne of God: 140  
 What golden Joys ambrosial clust'ring glow,  
 In *His* full beam, and ripen for the Just,  
 Where momentary Ages are no more ?



Where Time, and Pain, and Chance and Death expire?  
 And is it in the Flight of threescore years,  
 To push Eternity from human Thought,  
 And smother souls immortal in the Dust?  
 A soul immortal, spending all her Fires,  
 Wasting her strength in strenuous Idleness,  
 Thrown into Tumult, raptur'd, or alarm'd, 150  
 At ought this scene can threaten, or indulge,  
 Resembles *Ocean* into Tempest wrought,  
 To waft a Feather, or to drown a Fly.

Where falls this Censure? It o'erwhelms myself.  
 How was my Heart encrusted by the World?  
 O how self-fetter'd was my groveling Soul?  
 How, like a Worm, was I wrapt round and round  
 In filken thought, which reptile *Fancy* spun,  
 Till darken'd *Reason* lay quite clouded o'er

With



With soft conceit of endless Comfort *here*, 160  
 Nor yet put forth her Wings to reach the skies?

Night-visions may befriend, (as sung above)  
 Our waking Dreams are fatal : How I dreamt  
 Of things Impossible? (could Sleep do more?)  
 Of Joys perpetual in perpetual Change?  
 Of stable Pleasures on the tossing Wave?  
 Eternal Sun-shine in the Storms of life?  
 How richly were my noon-tide Trances hung  
 With gorgeous Tapestries of pictur'd Joys?  
 Joy behind Joy, in endless Perspective! 170  
 Till at Death's Toll, whose restless Iron tongue  
 Calls daily for his Millions at a meal,  
 Starting I woke, and found myself undone?  
 Where now my Frenzy's pompous Furniture?  
 The *cobweb'd* Cottage with its ragged wall  
 Of mould'ring mud, is *Royalty* to me!  
 The *Spider's* most attenuated Thread



Is Cord, is Cable, to man's tender Tie  
On earthly bliss ; it breaks at every Breeze.

O ye blest scenes of *permanent* Delight ! 180  
Full, above measure ! lasting, beyond bound !  
Could you, so rich in rapture, fear an End,  
That ghastly Thought would drink up all your Joy,  
And quite unparadise the realms of Light.  
Safe are you lodg'd above these rowling Spheres ;  
The baleful influence of whose giddy Dance,  
Sheds sad Vicissitude on all beneath.

*Here* teems with Revolutions every Hour ;  
And rarely for the better ; or the best,  
More mortal than the common births of Fate. 190

Each *Moment* has its Sickle, emulous  
Of *Time's* enormous Scythe, whose ample Sweep  
Strikes Empires from the root ; each *Moment* plays  
His little Weapon in the narrower sphere



Of sweet domestic Comfort, and cuts down  
The fairest bloom of sublunary Blifs.

Blifs ! sublunary Blifs ! proud words ! and vain :  
Implicit Treason to divine Decree !  
A bold invasion of the rights of Heaven !  
I clasp'd the Phantoms, and I found them Air. 200  
O had I weigh'd it e'er my fond Embrace !  
What darts of Agony had miss'd my heart ?  
Death ! Great Proprietor of all ! 'Tis thine  
To tread out Empire, and to quench the Stars ;  
The Sun himself by thy permission shines,  
And, one day, thou shalt pluck him from his sphere.  
Amid such mighty Plunder, why exhaust  
Thy *partial* Quiver on a Mark so mean ?  
Why, thy *peculiar* rancor wreck'd on me ?  
Infatiate Archer ! could not One suffice ? 210  
Thy shaft flew thrice, and thrice my Peace was slain ;  
And



And thrice, e'er thrice yon Moon had fill'd her Horn:  
 O *Cynthia* ! why so pale? Dost thou lament  
 Thy wretched Neighbour? Grieve, to see thy Wheel  
 Of ceaseless change outwhirl'd in human Life?  
 How wanes my *borrow'd* Bliss? from *Fortune's* smile,  
 Precarious Courtesy! not *Virtue's* sure,  
 Self-given, *solar*, ray of sound Delight.

In ev'ry vary'd Posture, Place, and Hour,  
 How widow'd every Thought of every Joy? 220  
 Thought, busy Thought! too busy for my Peace,  
 Thro' the dark Postern of Time long elaps'd,  
 Led softly, by the stillness of the Night,  
 Led, like a Murderer, (and such it proves!)  
 Strays, wretched Rover! o'er the pleasing *Past*,  
 In quest of wretchedness perversely strays;  
 And finds all Desert *now*; and meets the Ghosts  
 Of my departed Joys, a numerous Train!

I rue



I rue the Riches of my former Fate ;  
 Sweet Comfort's blasted Clusters make me sigh : 230  
 I tremble at the Blessings once so dear ;  
 And every Pleasure pains me to the Heart.  
 Yet why *complain*? or why complain for One!  
 Hangs out the Sun his Lustre but for me?  
 The single Man? are Angels all beside?  
 I mourn for Millions : 'tis the common Lot ;  
 In *this* shape, or in *that*, has Fate entail'd  
 The Mother's throes on all of woman born,  
 Not more the Children, than sure Heirs of *Pain*.

War, Famine, Pest, Volcano, Storm, and Fire, 240  
 Intestine Broils, *Oppression*, with her heart  
 Wrapt up in tripple Brass, besiege mankind :  
 God's Image, disinherited of Day,  
*Here* plung'd in Mines, forgets a Sun was made ;  
*There* Beings deathless as their haughty Lord,

C

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Are hammer'd to the galling Oar for life ;  
 And plough the Winter's wave, and reap Despair :  
*Some*, for hard Masters, broken under Arms,  
 In battle lopt away, with half their limbs,  
 Beg bitter bread thro' realms their Valour fav'd, 250  
 If so the Tyrant, or his Minion, doom :  
*Want*, and incurable *Disease*, (fell Pair !)  
 On hopeless Multitudes remorseless seize  
 At once ; and make a Refuge of the Grave :  
 How groaning *Hospitals* eject their Dead ?  
 What numbers groan for sad Admission there ?  
 What numbers once in *Fortune's* lap high-fed,  
 Solicit the cold hand of Charity ?  
 To shock us more, solicit it in vain ?  
 Ye filken Sons of Pleasure ! since in Pains 260  
 You rue more modish visits, visit *here*,  
 And breathe from your Debauch : *Give*, and reduce  
*Surfeit's*



*Surfeit's* Dominion o'er you : but so great  
Your Impudence, you blush at what is Right !

Happy ! did Sorrow seize on *such* alone :  
Not *Prudence* can defend, or *Virtue* save ;  
Disease invades the chastest Temperance ;  
And Punishment the Guiltless ; and Alarm  
Thro' thickest shades pursues the fond of Peace ;  
Man's Caution often into Danger turns, 270  
And his Guard falling, crushes him to death.  
Not *Happiness* itself makes good her name ;  
Our very Wishes give us not our wish ;  
How distant oft the Thing we doat on most,  
From that for which we doat, Felicity ?  
The *smoothest* course of Nature has its Pains,  
And *truest* Friends, thro' error, wound our Rest ;  
Without Misfortune, what Calamities ?  
And what Hostilities, without a Foe ?



Nor are Foes wanting to the best on earth : 280  
 But endless is the list of human Ills,  
 And Sighs might sooner fail, than Cause to figh.

A Part how small of the terraqueous Globe  
 Is tenanted by man? the rest a *Waste*,  
 Rocks, Deserts, frozen Seas, and burning Sands ;  
 Wild haunts of Monsters, Poisons, Stings, and Death :  
 Such is Earth's melancholy Map ! But far  
 More sad ! this Earth is a true Map of *man* :  
 So bounded are its haughty Lord's *Delights*  
 To *Woe*'s wide empire ; where deep *Troubles* tofs ; 290  
 Loud *Sorrows* howl ; envenom'd *Passions* bite ;  
 Ravenous *Calamities* our vitals seize,  
 And threat'ning *Fate*, wide-opens to devour.

What then am I, who sorrow for myself ?  
 In Age, in Infancy, from other's aid



Is all our Hope ; to teach us to be kind.  
*That*, Nature's *first*, *last* Lesson to mankind :  
 The selfish Heart deserves the pain it feels ;  
 More generous Sorrow while it sinks, exalts,  
 And conscious Virtue mitigates the Pang. 300  
 Nor Virtue, more than *Prudence*, bids me give  
 Swoln Thought a second channel ; who divide,  
 They weaken too, the Torrent of their grief :  
 Take then, O World ! thy much-indebted Tear :  
 How sad a Sight is human Happiness,  
 To those whose Thought can pierce beyond an Hour ?  
 O thou ! whate'er thou art, whose Heart exults !  
 Would'st thou I should congratulate thy Fate ?  
 I know thou would'st ; thy Pride demands it from me.  
 Let thy Pride pardon, what thy Nature needs, 310  
 The salutary Censure of a friend :  
 Thou happy *Wretch* ! by Blindness art thou blest ;  
 By Doatage dandled to perpetual Smiles :

Know,



Know, *Smiler* ! at thy peril art thou pleas'd ;  
 Thy Pleasure is the promise of thy Pain.  
*Misfortune*, like a Creditor severe,  
 But rises in demand for her Delay ;  
 She makes a scourge of past Prosperity,  
 To sting thee more, and double thy Distress.

*Lorenzo*, Fortune makes her court to thee, 320  
 Thy fond Heart dances, while the *Syren* sings.  
 Dear is thy Welfare ; think me not unkind ;  
 I would not damp, but to secure thy joys :  
 Think not that *Fear* is sacred to the Storm :  
 Stand on thy guard against the *smiles* of Fate.  
 Is Heaven tremendous in its Frown ! most sure :  
 And in its favours formidable too ;  
 Its favours here are Tryals, not Rewards ;  
 A call to Duty, not discharge from Care ;  
 And shou'd alarm us, full as much as Woes ; 330

Awake



Awake us to their *cause*, and *consequence*,  
 O'er our scan'd Conduct give a jealous Eye ;  
 And make us tremble, weigh'd with our Desert ;  
 Awe Nature's tumult, and chastise her Joys,  
 Lest while we clasp, we kill them ; nay invert  
 To worse than *simple* misery, their Charms :  
 Revolted Joys, like foes in civil war,  
 Like bosom friendships to resentment sour'd,  
 With rage envenom'd rise against our Peace.  
 Beware what Earth calls Happiness ; beware  
 All joys, but joys that never can expire : 340  
 Who builds on less than an *immortal* Base,  
 Fond as he seems, condemns his joys to Death.

Mine dy'd with thee, *Philander* ! thy last Sigh  
 Dissolv'd the charm ; the disenchant'd Earth  
 Lost all her Lustre ; where, her glittering Towers ?  
 Her golden Mountains, where ? all darken'd down



To naked Waste ; a dreary Vale of Tears ;  
 The great Magician's dead ! Thou poor, pale Piece  
 Of out-cast earth, in Darkneſs ! what a Change  
 From yeſterday ! Thy darling Hope ſo near, 350  
 (Long-labour'd Prize !) O how Ambition flush'd  
 Thy glowing cheek ? Ambition truly great,  
 Of virtuous Praise : Death's ſubtle ſeed within,  
 (Sly, treacherous Miner !) working in the Dark,  
 Smil'd at thy well-concerted ſcheme, and beckon'd  
 The Worm to riot on that Roſe ſo red,  
 Unfaded e'er it fell ; one moment's Prey !

Man's Foreſight is *conditionally* wiſe ;  
*Lorenzo !* Wiſdom into Folly turns  
 Oft, the firſt inſtant, its Idea fair 360  
 To labouring Thought is born. How dim our eye !  
 The preſent Moment terminates our fight ;  
 Clouds thick as thoſe on Doomsday, drown the *next* ;  
 We



We penetrate, we prophesy in vain.

*Time* is dealt out by Particles ; and each,

E'er mingled with the streaming sands of Life,

By Fate's inviolable oath is sworn

Deep silence, " Where Eternity begins."

By Nature's Law, what may be, may be *now* ;

There's no Prerogative in human Hours : 370

In human hearts what bolder Thought can rise,

Than man's Presumption on To-morrow's dawn ?

Where is To-morrow ? In another world.

For numbers this is certain ; the Reverse

Is sure to none ; and yet on this *perhaps*,

This *peradventure*, infamous for lies,

As on a rock of Adamant we build

Our mountain Hopes ; spin out eternal schemes,

As we the Fatal Sisters cou'd out-spin,

And, big with life's Futurities, expire. 380

D

Not



Not even *Philander* had bespoke his Shroud ;  
 Nor had He cause, a Warning was deny'd ;  
 How Many fall as suddain, not as safe ?  
 As suddain, tho' for Years admonisht home :  
 Of human Ills the last Extreme beware,  
 Beware, *Lorenzo* ! a slow-sudden Death.  
 How dreadful that deliberate Surprize ?  
 Be wise to day, 'tis madness to defer ;  
 Next day the fatal Precedent will plead ;  
 Thus on, till Wisdom is push'd out of life : 390  
*Procrastination* is the Thief of Time,  
 Year after year it steals, till all are fled,  
 And to the mercies of a Moment leaves  
 The vast Concerns of an Eternal scene.  
 If not so frequent, would not This be strange ?  
 That 'tis so frequent, *This* is stranger still.

Of



Of Man's miraculous Mistakes, This bears  
 The Palm, "That all Men are about to live."  
 For ever on the Brink of being born :  
 All pay themselves the compliment to think 400  
 They, one day, shall not drivel ; and their Pride  
 On this Reversion takes up ready Praise ;  
 At least, their own ; their future selves applauds ;  
 How excellent that Life they *ne'er* will lead ?  
 Time lodg'd in their *own* hands is *Folly's* Vails ;  
 That lodg'd in *Fate's*, to *Wisdom* they consign ;  
 The thing they can't but *purpose*, they *postpone* ;  
 'Tis not in *Folly*, not to scorn a Fool ;  
 And scarce in human *Wisdom* to do more :  
 All *Promise* is poor dilatory man, 410  
 And that thro' every Stage : When young, indeed,  
 In full content, we sometimes nobly rest,  
 Unanxious for ourselves ; and only wish,



As duteous sons, our Fathers were more Wise :  
 At *thirty* man *suspects* himself a Fool ;  
*Knows* it at *forty*, and reforms his Plan ;  
 At *fifty* chides his infamous Delay,  
 Pushes his prudent Purpose to *Resolve* ;  
 In all the magnanimity of Thought  
 Resolves ; and re-resolves : then dies the same. 420

And why ? Because he thinks himself Immortal :  
 All men think all men Mortal, but themselves ;  
 Themselves, when some alarming shock of Fate  
 Strikes thro' their wounded hearts the suddain Dread ;  
 But their hearts wounded, like the wounded Air,  
 Soon close, where past the shaft, no Trace is found :  
 As, from the *Wing* no scar the Sky retains ;  
 The parted Wave no furrow from the *Keel* ;  
 So dies in human hearts the Thought of Death :  
 Even with the tender Tear which Nature sheds 430  
 O'er



O'er those we love, we drop it in their Grave.  
 Can I forget *Philander*? That were strange;  
 O my full Heart! But should I give it vent,  
 The longest Night, tho' longer far, would fail,  
 And the *Lark* listen to my *midnight* Song.

The sprightly *Lark*'s shrill Mattin wakes the Morn;  
 Grief's sharpest Thorn hard-pressing on my Breast,  
 I strive, with wakeful Melody, to chear  
 The sullen Gloom, sweet *Philomel*! like Thee,  
 And call the Stars to listen: Every star 440  
 Is deaf to mine, enamour'd of thy Lay.  
 Yet be not vain; there are, who thine excell,  
 And charm thro' distant Ages: Wrapt in Shade,  
 Prisoner of Darkness! to the silent *Hours*,  
 How often I repeat their Rage divine,  
 To lull my Griefs, and steal my heart from Woe?  
 I rowl their Raptures, but not catch their Flame:

Dark



Dark, tho' not blind, like thee *Mæonides* !  
 Or *Milton* ! thee ; ah cou'd I reach your Strain !  
 Or *His*, who made *Mæonides* our *Own*. 450  
*Man* too he fung : *Immortal* man I sing ;  
 Oft bursts my Song beyond the bounds of Life ;  
 What, *now*, but Immortality can please ?  
 O had *He* prest his Theme, pursued the track,  
 Which opens out of Darknefs into Day !  
 O had he mounted on his wing of Fire,  
 Soar'd, where I sink, and fung *Immortal* man !  
 How had it blest mankind ? and rescued me ?



F I N I S.



*Speedily will be publish'd,*

**T**HE COMPLAINT : Or, *Right-Thoughts*  
On LIFE, DEATH, and IMMORTALITY.

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